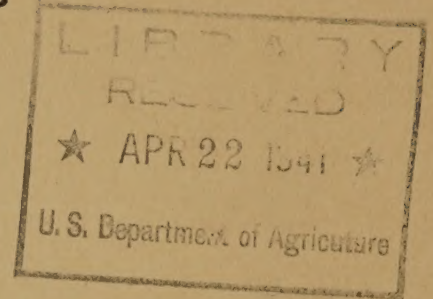


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



Rural
NEIGHBORHOODS
AND
COMMUNITIES
of
LEE COUNTY
ALABAMA

By
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AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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RURAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES OF LEE COUNTY, ALABAMA AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR LAND USE PLANNING

By John B. Holt

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Certain recommendations made in the Unified County Report of the Lee County Land Use Planning Committee proposed action on the part of the governmental agencies. On the other hand, many recommendations called for action on the part of farm operators and farm homemakers. In this way, the Lee County Committee indicated that it had encountered a problem that becomes very real in every county in which land use planning is initiated. Simply stated, the problem is how to enlist the cooperation of the farm families in adopting, so far as practicable, the recommendations of the County Land Use Planning Committee.

As an attempt, through a short professional-service project, to help the County Committee solve this problem, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics conducted a reconnaissance survey of the natural neighborhood and community groupings of the rural farm population living within Lee County, Alabama.

This report includes only white neighborhoods and communities. The white and Negro populations possess separate educational and religious institutions. These institutions tend to form the center of geographically segregated neighborhoods. The one institution which the Negroes and whites share in common is the economic. In this institution the Negroes participate largely as tenants, croppers, wage hands and house help, employed on the farms and in the homes of white owners and tenants, or renters of higher economic status. The geography and structure of the Negro neighborhoods and communities will be presented in a separate report.

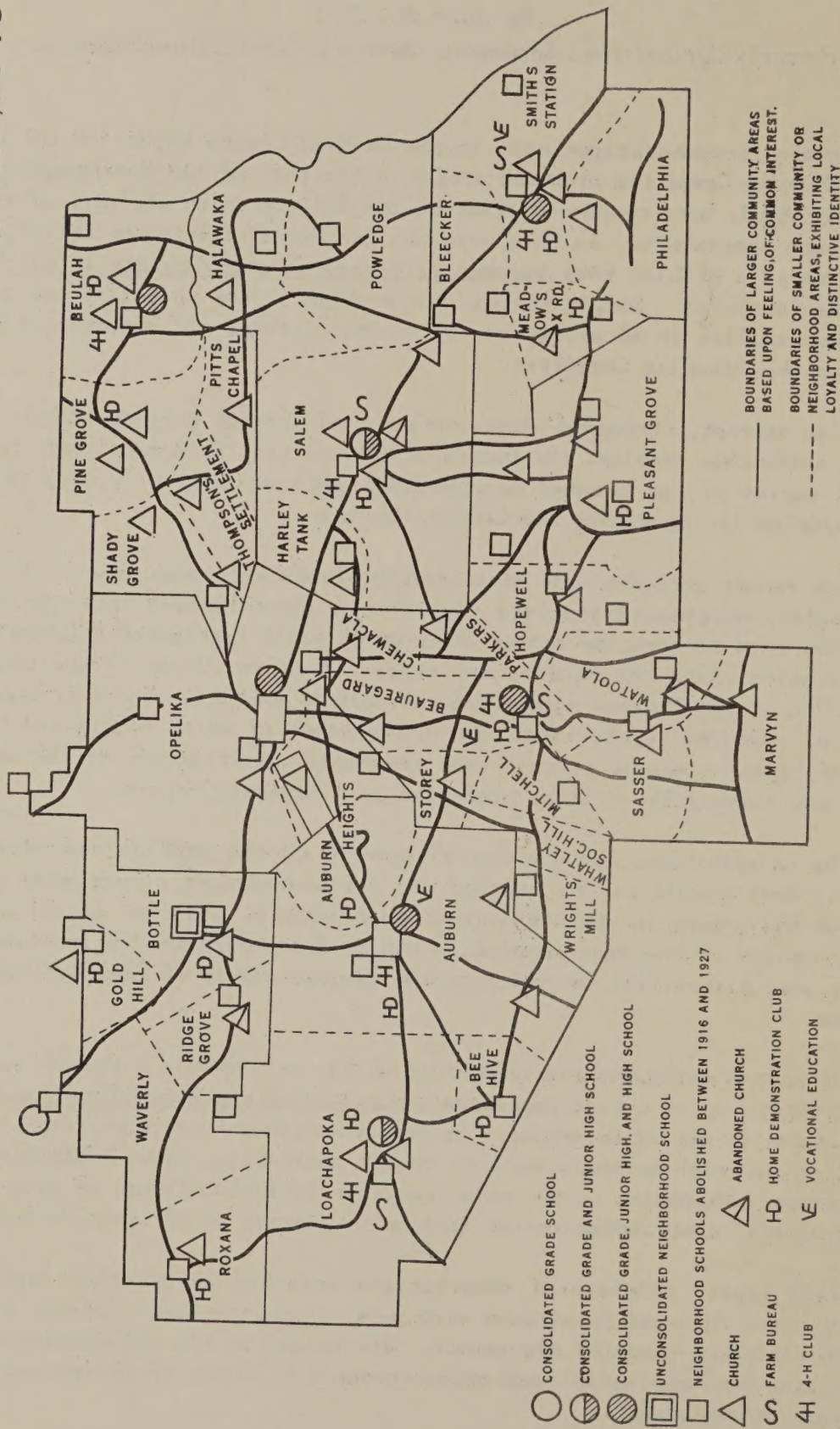
The neighborhood and community approach to the problem was adopted on the hypothesis that people can be reached and influenced most effectively through the leaders of the groups in which they tend to associate, and that if all such natural social groupings of the farm population can be discovered and their leaders identified, the most direct line for reaching the largest number of farm families will have been found.

The survey technique was simplified as far as possible. Primary attention was given to outlining on a base map those areas within which the farm families felt a distinct sense of mutual belonging. Secondary attention was paid to the basis of the association one with another, such as church membership, school attendance, living close together, belonging to the same tenure or farm-size group, or other situations which apparently contributed to the feeling of oneness or of mutually belonging.

This report consists of observations made and information received in the course of brief informal interviews with persons in farm homes and met at crossroads stores in different parts of the county. The nature of the information made it possible to have the remarks of each person checked by means of interviews with others in adjacent neighborhoods.

B. E. S. APR 22 1941

RURAL COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS IN LEE COUNTY, ALABAMA, 1940



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FIGURE 1

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Each interview included the following questions:

- (1) Where do the families live whom you know best and with whom you tend most to associate?
- (2) Why is it you happen to know these families better than others?
- (3) How many farm families live in your neighborhood or compose your group?
(The extent of the neighborhood boundaries were located on a map.)
- (4) How many of them own their own homes?
- (5) What is the usual size of land-ownership unit among these families?
- (6) What is the average number of plows on each unit?
- (7) Are the plows run mainly or exclusively by wage hands or sharecroppers or by the operators' families themselves? About how many in each group?
- (8) Are families in all categories inclined to attend and associate with each other in the same local organizations and institutions? If not, how do they divide up? Who are the natural leaders of each group?
- (9) With what larger area do you identify yourself?
- (10) Why do you identify yourself with this larger area?
- (11) What organizations are there in the larger area? Who attends them?
- (12) Where do you usually buy most of your food and supplies?

PART I

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

(1) In Lee County, two rather distinct types of social groupings of the rural farm population seem to stand out. The first type consists of farm families or persons who know each other rather intimately and who were inclined to associate with each other more frequently than with persons of families outside the group. Because these groups, in the past, have tended to be congregated geographically in adjacent or nearby farm homesteads, they have been called "neighborhoods."

Characteristic of this personal, more intimate, and more frequent type of association among farm people is the fact that within such groups ideas tend to be more freely discussed, opinions to be more fully expressed, a matter of general agreement to be more uniformly and completely adopted. Finally, attitudes formed within such groups are likely to become more durable and influential in the behavior of the group members than is the case in any other type of social grouping outside the family.

The significance of this type of social group for the Land Use Planning Program is obvious. The personal, frequent contacts of the neighborhood or small intimate group are probably, along with the school associations, the next most influential group in the formation of working habits, attitudes, and character, as well as the recreational life of the farm people.

(2) Approximately 30 neighborhoods in this sense are to be found among the white population in Lee County. They have been delineated on a base map (fig. 1, p.2).

(3) There is great variation among the neighborhoods.

(a) The number of families in the neighborhoods vary. The Home Demonstration Agent said that about one-fourth of the 30 white neighborhoods contain too few families (less than 15) to provide a basis for a local farm club or to warrant an individual farm meeting. Nevertheless, these small neighborhoods do constitute local farm groups whose self-consciousness and whose problems are sufficiently well defined to justify representation within a larger unit to which they might be attached for practical purposes.

(b) The bases or bonds of association holding neighborhood members together tend to vary. It is important to note that the general observations here indicate that the local church generally provides the most effective basis for neighborhood consciousness, loyalty, and association. Visiting from house to house is, as several informants expressed it, "not what it used to be," partly because of the recreation, diversion, and range of visiting now afforded by automobiles. The country crossroads store no longer provides a very important basis of neighborhood association among farm families in Lee County. In perhaps one-third of the neighborhoods it has completely succumbed to the larger trade center and disappeared. Kinship is still a very positive tie and basis for neighborhood solidarity in a few neighborhoods. The white schools have been consolidated and the neighborhood schoolhouse is gone except in one neighborhood.

At present, "beat" lines (minor civil division lines) do not correspond consistently with neighborhood lines. The facts seem to be that the political activity in the form of voting, and the agricultural administrative work conducted by beats, do not require sufficiently active and frequent participation by the families living within to cause them to acquire beat loyalties or consciousness. Their church participation and loyalty and their kinship or other bonds of personal nature are definitely stronger. Beat residence may re-enforce such bonds but does not effectively compete with them now. The farm families seem to participate or associate naturally by neighborhoods and communities. In many instances a civil division contains more than one neighborhood, the neighborhoods being no more closely associated one with the others than with neighborhoods lying within adjacent divisions. In a few cases, beat lines split neighborhoods. For purposes of developing natural leadership, to represent either individual neighborhoods or functional groups of neighborhoods, the use of the beat lines as the determinant of a social group would be inadequate.

(c) If participation in the local church tends to be the strongest basis for the intimate, personal type of farm-family association, the question may be raised as to the probable future of the rural country churches. In Lee County the largest

threat to the rural churches seems to be depopulation, the thinning of the white population through retiring off the farm, selling out, just moving to town, or dying with nonresident heirs or no heirs at all, and nonreplacement by other white families. The problem is already acute in several neighborhoods within the county. But the rural churches continue to maintain themselves in most of the county's rural neighborhoods. The rural churches of Lee County are shown by triangular symbols on figure 1. The number in the triangle refers to the denomination of the church in each case.

(d) In Lee County a trend is apparent which is similar to one found in most rural communities of the United States, and which has definite significance for farm programs of the Land Use Planning type. In Lee County the white neighborhoods, as a group of adjacently located farm families participating together in many forms of intimate and frequent association, are tending to disappear. Their disappearance seems to be associated with the thinning of the farm population, the consequent dismemberment of the local church, the substitution of automobile pleasure rides and distant visits for the earlier type of visiting among adjacent homes. It seems to be associated also with the consolidation of the local schools and the consequent disappearance of a neighborhood meeting place, which acted not only as a means of convenient association but also as a symbol of neighborhood individuality, self-consciousness, and solidarity. In frequent instances, resulting from consolidation, the only public neighborhood meeting hall was abolished, the main business basis for neighborhood meeting and cooperation was eliminated, and the habit of neighborhood meetings was lost. With improved transportation and a decrease in population, local crossroad stores have deteriorated or gone out of business.

(e) Intimate, personal group relationships continue to exist in Lee County, though in a modified form, for there is ample evidence of association among farm families on the basis of tenure status, length of residence, or other non-geographical distinction.

Insofar as tenure status may have provided the basis for social classes or stratification, which is commonly the case throughout many sections of the country, there does not seem to have been an increase in economic stratification, for the proportion of tenants among the total farming population does not seem to have increased greatly during the last 30 years. It was observed, however, that in certain areas where tenants are replacing owners on farms, the double distinction of being newcomers and tenants has acted as a persistent social barrier to association between older resident owner families and the newer tenant families. This tends to be particularly noticeable where tenants move into a group of adjacent farmsteads, thereby forming a neighborhood within an older community.

In one situation, the older community associations had been formed largely within one church, in which the newcomers did not seek membership. Although they patronized the same local store, the newcomers were not, therefore, considered a part of the older community. They formed an "island" apart. "They are nice enough people," observed one older resident, "but somehow we just don't associate together." Social rank appeared definitely involved although probably an unconscious attitude. Priority of residence and ownership generally tends to bestow feelings of superiority.

This aspect of social grouping thus complicates the community grouping by requiring recognition of groups within each community who associate more

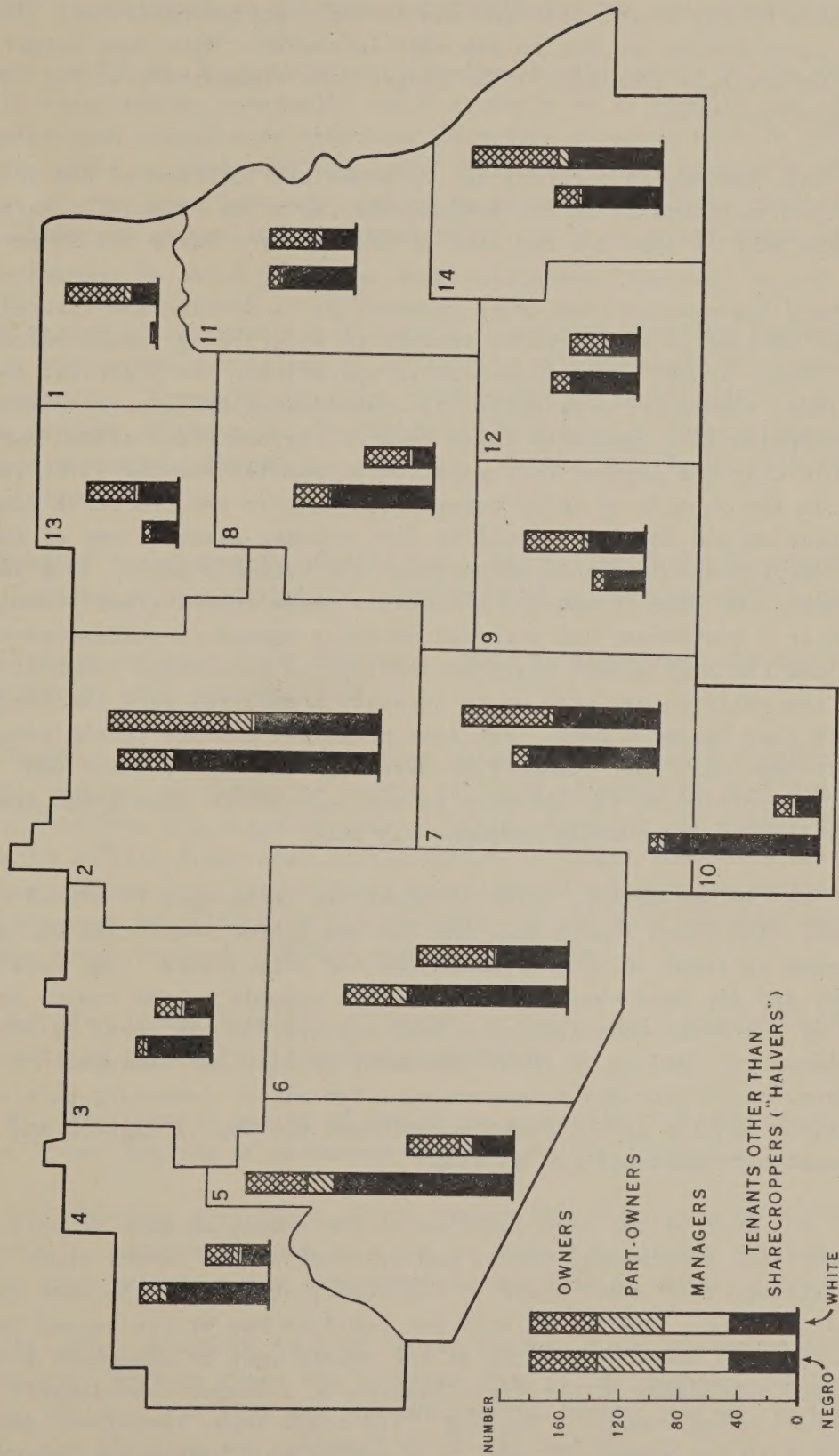
intimately with each other on a basis of like tenure status, or wealth, or length of residence, rather than upon mere adjacency of farm homes. Even the rural churches are becoming class institutions. New denominations have come in to provide religious services for the tenure groups, particularly the newcomers of lowest tenure status, who do not feel at home in the better established churches. The intimate grouping becomes less a geographically definable group, and more a group that is marked by economic and social likeness, although it will frequently still be found in its old form within the larger geographic community. The significance of this for a program of the type of land use planning is that instead of consistent homogeneity within a neighborhood of adjacent farm families, which could formerly be represented by or reached through a single leader who was in intimate contact with all neighborhood members, one may find social classes, each of which, for purposes of representation or education in farm programs, might have its own natural leader and would tend to be more or less out of touch with the leaders or members of the groups "above" or "below" it.

Insofar as class is fixed by tenure status, the degree to which rural farm society in Lee County has become stratified may be indicated roughly by the map in figure 2, showing the number of farm families in each beat or minor civil division belonging to each of the following tenure classes: Owners, part-owners (those renting a portion of their farm land), managers, tenants other than sharecroppers, and sharecroppers (locally called "halvers"). The 725 owners comprise 22 percent of the farm families; combined with the part-owners, they make up 26 percent. In other words, only 26 percent of the farm families own their own homes. This varies from 11 percent in one beat to 35 percent in another. Skipping the managers, who form only two-tenths of 1 percent of the farm families, 42 percent of the farm families are shown to be tenants of various types exclusive of sharecroppers or those "working on halves." The sharecroppers or halvers, who contribute their labor and half the cost of the seed and fertilizer, make up 31 percent of the farm families.

Three points must not be forgotten here. Difference in tenure status does not invariably mean social difference or that the classes do not associate closely with one another. In the South, however, the social difference between owners and tenants, as a rule, is definitely greater than elsewhere in the United States. Then the sharecropper group, lowest of the groups mentioned, is so close in status to the farm laborers that objection may be raised to the inclusion of sharecroppers as tenants. By combining sharecroppers with laborers, however, we are merely augmenting the latter group of farm families, which we have not hitherto considered, but whose cooperation in the development of the best use of land and other community resources will be recognized as indispensable.

(4) All the previous observations have dealt with the first type of social groupings of the farm families or persons in Lee County, namely, the social grouping characterized by intimate, personal, and frequent association one with another--the neighborhood. There is very definitely a second type of social grouping among the farm people in the county which is characterized by less intimate, less personal, and less frequent association, generally based upon meeting together infrequently in connection with certain matters of public interest. In social groupings of this type, the farm people tend less to *know* each other than to *know of* each other. Geographically such groupings usually extend far beyond neighborhood lines. They tend to form what is generally called the larger community. Contrary to certain other uses of the word

NUMBER OF WHITE AND NEGRO FARMERS IN EACH TENURE STATUS, LEE COUNTY, ALABAMA, 1935



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FIGURE 2

"community," for the purposes of this survey, a community was defined as a cluster of neighborhoods which actually have more interests in common than the same neighborhoods would have if grouped in any other way. Nine such communities were found in Lee County, not all of them by any means clear-cut and strong functioning groups. The method of delineating their boundaries was to ask each informant, "With what larger area of people do you tend to identify yourself?" The larger farm communities of Lee County have the following characteristics:

(a) The map in figure 1 (p. 2) shows the location of the schools. The consolidated school seems to be the predominant factor in creating a larger-community feeling on the part of the farm families of Lee County. There are three exceptions to this rule. Two of them are communities that owe their sense of community individuality to rather sharp segregation from other communities by distinctive natural boundaries such as creek bottoms or an extensive expanse of intervening uncultivated and unpopulated land. Their school populations are so sparse that for practical purposes they must be included within the area served by consolidated schools of other communities. The third exception is a community which retains its own grade school unconsolidated. It is possible that the present participation of pupils from the first two exceptional communities in the schools of other communities may, in the course of time, transfer the identification and loyalty as well as the intimate associations of the young generation to the larger school area of which they have become a part. This is not yet true for the adults. One other community has only a consolidated grade school. The adults seem to feel it a misfortune and a threat to their community solidarity to have the junior-high and the high-school children transported to another community. In this case, also, the children may grow up to identify themselves with the larger school area of which they become a part. The same principle applies to the situation arising from the fact that only four communities have high schools of their own. But since a much smaller proportion of the children attend high school than grade school, the loss of community loyalty is probably considerably less.

(b) In Lee County, rural children are encouraged to attend consolidated rural schools. The urban county seat has its own school facilities but does not have busses to bring in rural children from beyond the city limits. But rural parents are permitted to, and do, send their children to the schools in the county seat. The maintenance of the rural consolidated school centers for the rural children undoubtedly helps to enhance the feeling of rural community loyalty and independence. The Parent-Teachers' Association provides an opportunity for active community participation for the farm adults, and the consolidated schoolhouse provides a lighted and heated place where farm community meetings can be held.

(c) Most of the farm families in the county do most of their buying of clothes, groceries, implements, parts, and services at the county seat, insofar as this is not done through mail-order houses. The county seat is at the same time their center of political interest. Fewer than half the families buy at the second largest town or outside the county. However, trading at the county seat or elsewhere does not seem able to compete with attendance of the farm children at a common consolidated school as a basis for establishing community feeling. The trade area, therefore, does not seem to be coincident with the community, nor is it likely to displace the community as the second strongest social grouping, outside the family, in influencing and developing attitudes and practices.

(d) There has been a tendency to look to the new larger consolidated-school communities as adequate substitutes for the smaller neighborhoods as suitable units for organizing farm people. In Lee County the larger rural community grouping does not appear to represent an adequate substitute for the old neighborhood grouping.

In the first place, as pointed out previously, the adults of the community group do not usually associate so personally and frequently as is usually the case in the intimate neighborhood grouping or tenure or farm-size grouping that is now rapidly superseding the older neighborhood pattern. This means that, among the adults at least, the acceptance of new ideas does not tend to be so nearly uniform, complete, nor binding as in the neighborhood or smaller intimate group, nor are the attitudes likely to be so durable.

In the second place, more significantly, community meetings frequently do not seem to enlist the active participation of certain neighborhoods or tenure groups within the community. Community meetings tend rather to be attended, and to be dominated, by the leaders of those neighborhoods or farm-size or tenure classes which have the highest socio-economic status and prestige. Causes underlying this situation are suggested as follows:

(1) Lack of transportation facilities, interfering with the attendance of many poorer farm families at general public meetings held in the community center.

(2) Distance or poor roads that are likely to discourage the use of the transportation facilities that are available.

(3) Tendency of what leadership does exist among the farm neighborhoods of lower economic, tenure, or farm-size status to yield silently to more dominant leaders who generally come from the neighborhoods of higher economic and tenure status, or for other reasons to refrain from vocal participation in larger community meetings. For these and other reasons, the larger rural consolidated school community cannot be regarded as an adequate substitute in all respects for the more intimate social groupings of which it has been composed. "Other reasons" might be

(a) The lesser interest of tenant or small owner groups in the larger commercial issues of community agricultural problems.

(b) The shorter period of residence generally characteristic of tenants, giving them a lesser feeling of permanent interest in the community.

(c) The wide acceptance of the theory that the right to voice opinion on policy in community matters accrues to a man in proportion to his property holdings in the community; that is, the money investment he may have at stake in the community.

(4) Attention should be focused on two extreme types of communities found within the county. Between these two extremes most of the communities could be placed. Representative of the first type are the Beauregard, Smiths Station, and Beulah communities. All are thriving and composed of strong constituent white neighborhoods. They are characterized by a larger number of resident white owners and a lower proportion of the land in absentee ownership. It is significant that they possess a higher

proportion of white population to the total population; and a higher ability to absorb and maintain the increased population from the oncoming generation. Finally, in these communities one finds better practices in land cultivation, better cooperation with agricultural educational agencies, and a more progressive spirit as evinced in the support of community institutions.

The opposite extreme is represented by the community of Roxana, characterized by a weak community consciousness, weak neighborhoods, a much smaller number of white farm owners, a high proportion of the land in absentee ownership, and a lower proportion of white population to the total population. It shows, also, a lower ability to retain and maintain an increased white population. Finally, within this community one finds the most urgent need of better land use practices and a lack of cooperation with the educational services of agricultural agencies.

Differences in the susceptibility of the soil to erosion, in the original comparative fertility of the soil and in the susceptibility of the cotton crop to the boll-weevil pest have had their share in the present divergent pictures of agricultural health and disintegration. But recognition of these differences and of the contributory underlying causes leads to our final observation.

(5) Our final observation is that the present condition of the land is, after all, primarily the result of human activity. Through technical progress we human beings have acquired greater and greater control over the physical forces and material resources from which we draw our living. But this control is really in the nature of deft manipulation of natural forces which we cannot start or stop. We have merely offset one against the other or combined two to achieve results different and even opposite to those previously in action. Up to the present time, in Lee County, we have apparently not found it worth while to apply all the technical knowledge at the command of the State Agricultural College located within the county limits. Those who have had the deciding vote or authority in farm operations have found it more profitable to permit the resources to dwindle. But now the point seems to have been reached at which there is a clearer recognition that resources must be conserved and at the same time must continue to produce a farm living, and the living must be at a higher and a more adequate plane than heretofore. The Land Use Planning Committee for Lee County, aided by the Community Committees and its Subcommittees, have made recommendations as to what should be done.

We are suddenly confronted with the problem of how to precipitate these recommendations into action. Immediately we feel dependent upon those mentioned above who have the deciding vote or authority in farm operations.

The degree and the direction of cooperation between landlord, creditor, or furnisher, tenant, cropper, and laborer determines the use to which the land is put. These hold the agricultural future of Lee County in their hands, to a large extent, although it is recognized that they in turn operate within certain restrictions imposed by outside forces of different types.

This survey report would repeat only what the farm families of Lee County already know if it merely said that the degree of cooperation among the farm families of different classes is very low. The report wishes to call attention to a fact that

seems to be less well known, namely, that *human beings tend to cooperate in proportion to the degree to which they feel it is to their interest to cooperate*, or, in other words, in proportion to their incentives. This is true of the landlord, of the tenant, of the credit merchant, of the cropper, and of the wage-hand.

In completing the observations recorded during the survey, the report can merely call attention to the present lack of organizations or other ways of association through which mutually beneficial lines of cooperation could be agreed upon and through which incentives could be arranged to call forth willingness on the part of all those groups whose cooperation is necessary for the maximum development of the land and human resources of Lee County.

DIGEST OF RECOMMENDATIONS DERIVED FROM A RECONNAISSANCE DELINEATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES IN LEE COUNTY

Recommendations are:

(1) That community committeemen be selected to represent the as yet unrepresented neighborhoods of Roxaná, Gold Hill, Bee Hive, Wrights Mill, Storey, Mitchell, Sasser, Hopewell, Powledge, Halawaka, Pine Grove, and Philadelphia.

(2) That the neighborhood representative from Wrights Mill be allowed to meet with the Beauregard Community Committee. Likewise that the neighborhood representatives from Hopewell, Pleasant Grove, and Beauregard neighborhoods be permitted to meet with the Beauregard Community Committee. That L. U. P. community areas be brought as closely as possible into line with the natural community areas within which the farmers tend to associate, which can be done for the most part without violating beat lines, but merely by regrouping of beats. The primary exception would be that of Wrights Mill and the northern portion of the Beauregard natural community area (Beauregard neighborhood).

(3) That the functions of the Community Committee Representative be given careful reconsideration to emphasize the following points:

(a) That the essence of Land Use Planning is farmer participation in the formulation of agricultural program plans which affect him; that committee work on a representative basis is instituted only as a substitute for direct participation by the farmers themselves.

(b) That, therefore, the community committee representative must

(1) Know personally the farms and the problems of the farmers as they see them, and their ideas and opinions on farm and home practices and problems.

(2) Have their confidence in speaking for them, in order that recommendations which he helps to formulate may receive their general approval.

(3) Keep his community informed concerning ideas and recommendations formulated in committee meetings in order that the farmers of his neighborhood may appreciate the fact that Land Use Planning is in operation and is forming recommendations, and that it is their organization and tool rather than a farmer advisory committee assisting the County Agent as a special favor to him at his request.

(4) That, in order to infuse this viewpoint into neighborhood or farm community thinking as soon as possible, the following steps be undertaken:

(a) Community Committee members be instructed in this viewpoint.

(b) Leaflet material be given them to distribute to their neighbors showing the work of the Land Use Planning Committees, including copies of the map of the county and of the recommendations made thus far.

(c) That Community Committee members be asked to obtain statements from their neighbors as to how far they are willing to cooperate in carrying out those recommendations of the County Committee which call for farmer action, such as terracing, sowing of cover crops, soil-building crops, planting of gardens, development of pasture, and so forth.

(d) That community-wide meetings be held, in which a special effort is made to have delegations present from the component neighborhoods of the communities.

(e) That, under the guidance of the teachers of Vocational Education, a Land Use Planning Program publicity campaign be held in the rural high schools and grammar schools, in order to acquaint the young people with the program and to use them as a vehicle for arousing the interest of their parents; that in this publicity campaign especial emphasis be placed on the points that all neighborhoods should be represented, that this is the farmers' program, and that community committeemen are serving their communities as personal representatives and not as administrative assistants to the County Agent.

(f) That ministers having rural churches and congregations be told of the program and asked to cooperate in view of the great possibilities in it for the basis of developing and the cooperation of community institutions.

The above recommendations are based on a conviction

(1) That the essence of the Land Use Planning Program is farmer participation in the formulation of agricultural policies and plans that affect the farmers.

(2) That committee work is necessary because direct participation is impracticable.

(3) That the committee representative must be a personal associate of the farmers he represents because committee representatives in this program must know the farmer personally

(a) to be able to speak for him,

(b) to have his confidence in speaking for him, and

(c) to be able to carry back to him personally the ideas and recommendations of the committee.

(4) That because farm people tend to associate personally in neighborhoods, each neighborhood should have a representative who is known as its representative among the farm families who comprise the neighborhood.

PART II

INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIONS OF LEE COUNTY COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

I. BEAUREGARD (Larger Community)

The Beauregard Larger Community, occupying the south-central part of Lee County, contains probably one-fifth of the total county area. The boundaries correspond roughly to the limits of the grade-school and high-school bus routes, radiating from the Beauregard Consolidated School located near the center of the large community.

The generally similar soil and agricultural conditions, common interests, and larger community loyalty, and the clearly "in-between" areas setting off the community from other larger communities in Lee County make the Beauregard Larger Community an appropriate unit for Land Use Planning on the larger community level.

Beauregard exhibits the strongest larger-community loyalty in the county. There tends to be within it the least insistence upon the retention of neighborhood identity. The elimination of 10 or 11 neighborhood grade schools and the gradual extinction of numerous crossroads stores as neighborhood centers and symbols has been compensated by a healthy growth outward of community feeling and participation centering in Beauregard core neighborhood. There the consolidated school provides the center for a very active Farm Bureau, Home Demonstration Club, and 4-H Club, besides regular school activities.

The community feeling seems to ignore beat or minor civil division lines, for it draws from Opelika and Auburn beats farm families who definitely prefer affiliation with Beauregard rural institutions than those of the two cities which form the centers of their own beats. The "Beauregard feeling" permeates the next beat to the east and slightly beyond it, where a considerable abandoned-farm area separates it from Bleeker or Smiths Station.

One of the most populous of the larger communities of Lee County, Beauregard Larger Community, contains a comparatively high proportion of white farmers to Negro farmers. This area possesses sandy soil originally rather infertile compared with the virgin red land of the county. It is probable, therefore, that it attracted white farm families of smaller capital than those who settled the more northerly, red-land parts of the county. If this is true, the sandy soil may account in part for the high proportion of white to Negro farmers.

The consolidated school has drawn together, during the last 15 years, what were previously 12 rather well-defined small communities or farm neighborhoods. In addition to the school consolidation, a very perceptible thinning of the farm population in the 1920's and 1930's has sapped the vitality of local neighborhood identity. But as there was previously a denser white population from which to draw in this area, the process of depopulation has not been nearly so apparent as in other sections of the county, in which the population had been thinned at an earlier date.

Component Neighborhoods within the Beauregard Larger Community:

- (1) Wrights Mill (Sand Hill). In this neighborhood larger absentee ownership

has been passing to small operator owners. The local Sand Hill School was abolished and an early, strong Christian Church moved beyond the county line to Little Texas, leaving no institutions in the neighborhood. Although resident in Auburn Beat, and requested to attend farm meetings, the local people feel more drawn to Beauregard as their community center. This is partly because of an aversion toward the urbanity of Auburn and partly because of kinship bonds, some of the residents having migrated from areas closer to the Beauregard Center. The inclusion of Wrights Mill in the Beauregard school-bus route fortifies the feeling of identity with Beauregard. The neighborhood is of sufficient distinction and has enough vitality to require separate representation on a community committee.

(2) Whatley (Society Hill Road). This is a sparse kinship and fairly large owner-operator settlement on a thin north-south ridge which never maintained separate institutions, but which formed a fairly distinct social group between Wrights Mill and Mitchell. The Whatley Mill at the north of the neighborhood added a measure of separate identity. The ownership pattern seems to be on a larger scale than in Wrights Mill but the smaller population and the absence of even an earlier school center places this area on the borderline of requiring separate representation.

(3) Mitchell. This is a well-defined and self-conscious neighborhood of a few large owners and many white as well as Negro tenants, centering in the Mitchell store. A consolidation of ownership has taken place through the foreclosure of store accounts and credits. Neighborhood feeling is based partly on kinship as well as proximity and the common store, but perhaps equally on church membership in the Primitive Baptist Church lying to the north and outside of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is one of the strongest in the larger community and deserves separate representation in the committee.

(4) Storey. A sister neighborhood to Mitchell, its residents, frequently kin, attend the same church as the residents of Mitchell, located within the Storey neighborhood. The population seems to be dwindling. Since losing its school, it feels the triple centrifugal pull toward Auburn, Opelika, and Beauregard, from which it lies about equi-distant. It is geographically and socially sufficiently distinct to warrant membership on a community committee.

(5) Beauregard. The elongated core of Beauregard Larger Community is the Beauregard neighborhood, containing the consolidated school and various community clubs. Previously it had its own neighborhood school. This school and the strong kinship ties and crossroads store have provided the institutional basis for a strong neighborhood loyalty, which is reaching outward to include wider areas.

(6) Chewacla. Chewacla neighborhood, like Storey, is handicapped by its proximity to Opelika. Its loyalties seem to be split three or four ways. It is definitely part of the "in-between" area which surrounds Opelika on nearly all sides. The white families are mostly tenants and both they and the remaining owners are finding it difficult to maintain themselves. The women tend to cling to the local churches--Methodist and Assemblies of God. The men associate mostly in Opelika, but the children attend the Beauregard consolidated school. The children or parents of many of the families work in the Opelika or Pepperell mills. On the map (fig. 1, p. 2)

the neighborhood has been included in the Beauregard Larger Community. This is perhaps erroneous or at least premature, since the adult interest, if not loyalty, is attached more to Opelika than to the Beauregard Larger Community. Within either the Opelika or Beauregard larger communities, Chewacla neighborhood would deserve separate representation.

(7) Parkers. Parkers is a sparsely populated neighborhood definitely within the Beauregard Larger Community. Its loyalties are chiefly kinship and religious, centering on the one hand in the patriarchal landlordship of a large landowner who rents to his sons and sons-in-law, and on the other hand, in the local Baptist church. Somewhat segregated geographically, it should have its own committeeman.

(8) Watoola. Watoola neighborhood, consisting of a dwindling number of small owner-operators, running one to five plows, and about half of whose members are kin, centers in the local Methodist church.

(9) Sasser. Sasser is a fairly populous neighborhood of smaller farms operating from one to five plows. The number of its population and the unity given it through its local Baptist church justify separate representation on the Larger Community Committee.

(10) Hopewell. Hopewell, before the consolidation of schools, was rather independent of the Beauregard neighborhood center, but it recognized itself as forming a part of the larger area which is now called Beauregard. Its numerous population and strong Methodist church have maintained fairly well the neighborhood institutional basis ever since the elimination of the local school. A large proportion of the farmers are owner-operators of modest size, running one to five plows.

(11) Pleasant Grove. Pleasant Grove is on the borderline of being a larger community by itself. It contains three crossroads store centers, Griffins store, J. P. Meadows store, and Gillett, one of them seeming still to thrive. The Baptist and Methodist churches are the centers for three smaller neighborhoods. Farm operating units, managed largely by resident owner operators, are of medium to large size, averaging 500 acres cultivated by 1 to 20 plows. It is thoroughly conscious of belonging to the larger community of Beauregard, largely perhaps because of school consolidation, but its vitality and distance from Beauregard may justify its being organized as a separate community for Land Use Planning purposes.

(12) Marvin. Marvin neighborhood is practically a hamlet of predominantly larger owners. The neighborhood corresponds closely to beat lines. About 1932 the beat was transferred to Lee County from the County immediately south of Lee County in exchange for the Phenix City Beat lying formerly in the southeast corner of Lee County. A local Methodist church is an additional basis for neighborhood loyalty. A separate representative would seem advisable and justified.

II. SMITHS STATION (Larger Community)

The larger community of Smiths Station consists of two pairs of neighborhoods, Smiths Station and Philadelphia Church or Dukes Store neighborhoods on the one hand and Meadows Cross Roads and Bleecker on the other. The ties which bind the pairs into one are very weak, consisting of the consolidated school attendance and denominational inter-church meetings. The amenities and the prestige enjoyed by Smiths Station after

the consolidated schools had been awarded it were resented by Bleecker which wished to maintain its own identity. However, in grouping neighborhoods for community committee organization the larger Smiths Station Community probably represents a fairly good basis for organization provided each neighborhood is well represented. It would seem desirable to organize neighborhood committees which would send representatives to the larger community committee.

Component Neighborhoods within the Smiths Station Larger Community:

(1) Meadows Cross Roads. Since the demise of the Meadows Cross Roads church and local school, the neighborhood Baptists attend at Bleecker and are therefore being absorbed socially within the Bleecker orbit. But Meadows Cross Roads still retains its own crossroads store and Home Demonstration Club. Its population is stable and, though not very numerous, would deserve separate representation on a community committee. Its land ownerships are for the most part modest in size.

(2) Bleecker. A railroad shipping point, a well-established highway crossroads store, and a Baptist church provide the institutional basis for what will probably remain as a strong and durable neighborhood center. The white population lives primarily south of Bleecker on small ownerships, 60 percent of them being owners, it is estimated. Originally, the part of Bleecker neighborhood to the south, beyond a belt of woods, maintained a separate identity. It was called Burgersville. It passed away with the loss of its local school, church, and a large portion of its original population, and the present population, attending church to some extent at Bleecker, identify themselves with Bleecker. A number of the newer tenant families, although quite respected by Bleecker residents, are not recognized yet as part of the Bleecker neighborhood. Tenure status, recency of entering the neighborhood, and distinction between farming, part-time work in the woods, and full-time work in Columbus tend to detract from the social solidarity of the neighborhood, but it certainly deserves separate representation on the community committee.

(3) Philadelphia Church (Dukes Store). The Philadelphia Church or Dukes Store neighborhood is perhaps more a sub-area of Smiths Station than it is distinctively individual neighborhood. Its own boundary passes imperceptibly into Smiths Station. The chief basis for separating it from Smiths Station is its geographic extent, passing beyond the point of feasibility with which a common LUP Community Committeeman could represent both areas.

(4) Smiths Station. Smiths Station neighborhood centers, like Bleecker, in a railroad shipping point, a crossroads store, the consolidated school, and a church. A 4-H Club, a Farm Bureau, and a Home Demonstration Club augment the prestige and dominance of Smiths Station in the larger community. The pull of Columbus commercially and the residence of a considerable group of part-time farmers of industrial rural dwellers detract from its unity.

III. SALEM AND THE VALLEY

Salem and Wacoochee are distinct communities, each with its own component neighborhoods. The number of neighborhoods in each is so small that each community would scarcely justify having its own community committee. It would seem logical to urge their cooperation in maintaining one committee. However, the distance persons,

representing the farthest neighborhoods, would have to travel might be prohibitive, quite apart from the difficulty represented in the lack of mutual interest and common loyalty. The meeting place would probably have to alternate between Powledge and Salem.

Component Neighborhoods with Salem and the Valley:

(1) Salem. Salem neighborhood is more a larger community in itself, consisting of families living in the hamlet at a railroad station and scattered southwest of the station, over a considerable distance, with two churches, a consolidated grade and high school, a Farm Bureau, Home Demonstration Club and 4-H Club. The community is well organized and self-conscious.

The holdings are primarily large, varying from three hundred to seven or eight thousand, cultivated mainly by Negro wage hands or share tenants. On the edges of the community are some poorer tenant families who, during "prohibition" days bootlegged, but who now merely subsist. Between Salem and Beauregard communities are two very large holdings operated by managers in charge of Negro wage labor. The northern portion of the community, rising to wooded ridges, is almost completely abandoned farm land. A considerable Negro community is found there. Along the Halawaka-Opelika road are families who attend the Sarah Methodist Church, but they are probably less identified with Salem than with Opelika or Shady Grove.

(2) Harley Tank. Harley Tank neighborhood in northwest Salem community is a collection of white, mostly tenant families, with rather tenuous and unstable institutional ties. The Union Grove Baptist seems to be the strongest church. A Holiness church (Assembly of God) was recently established in the adjacent neighborhood of Chewacla and tends to draw membership from the Harley Tank area. The neighborhood has definitely declined in wealth and social cohesion. There remain but a few resident owners. On the whole it is characteristic of worn out land in an in-between area on the edge of Opelika. It lacks neighborhood feeling. Continuing north of this neighborhood, one finds a group of poorer white families who either do not attend church or who lean toward Holiness religion, attending the "Assembly of God" at Chewacla or Opelika. Many of the families have members working in the textile mills of Opelika and Pepperell. This, again, is an in-between area.

(3) Wacoochee. Perhaps Wacoochee is the best general designation for a considerably broken terrain lying adjacent to the Chattahoochee River extending from Smiths Station on the south to the Backwater, the south boundary of the Beulah community, on the north. In the area are two farm neighborhoods, Powledge-Valley, on Wacoochee Creek and Halawaka-Mechanicsville, on Mill Creek, each with its crossroads store and one with its church center. Both Halawaka and Powledge lie on the local Chattahoochee Valley Railway. Both neighborhoods seem to be declining. Nevertheless, they evidence considerable residual neighborhood loyalty and resent somewhat the transportation of their children to outside consolidated schools, the Halawaka-Mechanicsville children going for grade, junior, and senior high school to Beulah, the Powledge-Valley children going to Salem for grade and junior high and to Smiths Station for senior high school.

The neighborhoods are weakly, if at all, organized. The small number of families is one hindrance.

It has been suggested that the two neighborhoods be represented on a joint committee with representatives from the Salem neighborhoods. But it is possible that the Halawaka-Mechanicsville neighborhood will be drawn gradually into the orbit of Beulah and ally itself less and less consciously with Powledge-Valley. The fact that they both vote at Powledge helps to maintain the old feeling of mutually belonging, however. The organization of these two neighborhoods into committee work or clubs is one of the most difficult assignments in the county.

IV. BEULAH (Larger Community)

Beulah Larger Community occupying the northeast portion of the county is, along with Beauregard, one of the strongest and best organized communities in the county. It comprises five active church-centered neighborhoods, Shady Grove, Pine Grove, Thompsons Settlement, Pitts Chapel, and Beulah, --three of them having two churches. The church neighborhoods are cooperative and friendly with each other, visit and function together socially very often. Some of the neighborhoods have two churches. There are crossroads stores in Beulah, Pine Grove, and Shady Grove. The larger community is populous enough to support consolidated grade, junior, and senior high schools at Beulah and is sufficiently socially inclined to maintain a 4-H Club and Home Demonstration Club. Land ownerships are small, and farms are generally operated by the owners. The community represents no great difficulty in community organization for Land Use Planning.

V. WAVERLY (Larger Community)

Waverly Larger Community is a makeshift designation for a corner of the county once containing three or four wealthy farm neighborhoods now reduced to dwindling crossroads with a few remaining farmsteads. Waverly town lies partially outside the county, but acts as the trade center for much of the area. The only cohesive element binding the neighborhoods is the common grade school at Waverly, with the exception of one neighborhood, which retains its one-teacher grade school. There is probably still a much greater neighborhood loyalty, centering in local churches, and in the one case, in a neighborhood, than there is a larger community loyalty.

Component Neighborhoods within the Beulah Larger Community:

(1) Roxana. Roxana maintains its own church, crossroads store and Home Demonstration Club. During the last 20 years the white population has dwindled to a few families, for the most part owner-operators with moderate size holdings. Roxana has rich memories of a wealthy and aristocratic past. But the white population has departed, abandoning the land to woods or passing its ownership to former Negro slaves and tenants, who now comprise the bulk of the population. Roxana grade school children go to Waverly, and high school children go to Auburn.

(2) Waverly. Waverly neighborhood consists of a very few families on the periphery of the town. The area is populated generally by Negro tenants.

(3) Gold Hill. The story of Gold Hill is similar to the story of Roxana; it was once a more affluent center, as several fine mansions testify, and it has not yet declined so greatly as has Roxana. A much larger part of its land is cultivated by Negro wage hands under managers operating large holdings. It lies on a railroad, has a station, crossroads store, and a church.

(4) Ridge Grove. Ridge Grove has been abandoned by its earlier owner operators, except for two or three families. To some extent white tenants have replaced these. The church has been abandoned, and local church members attend at Bottle, or Farmville. Many of the white tenants have family members working in Auburn or Opelika. There is little neighborhood consciousness.

(5) Bottle or Farmville. Bottle, or Farmville, has the only white one-teacher grade school in the county. This is partly in deference to its dislike of sending its grade children to Opelika. The families are mixed owner and tenant operators of small to moderate size farms. A considerable neighborhood feeling exists.

VI. LOACHAPOKA, and VII. AUBURN Communities

Within the area which coincides roughly with the precinct lines of Loachapoka and Auburn beats, are four strong neighborhoods with considerable local loyalty, of three distinct types. The only bond for them is the common high school at Auburn. The neighborhoods pair off for their grade and junior high-school facilities. Each neighborhood has its own Home Demonstration Club. Two of them have 4-H Clubs and one a Farm Bureau. Not all have local churches. The basis for proposing that the neighborhoods join in one larger community is merely the probable saving of effort, due to the fact that transportation is easy to either Loachapoka or Auburn from all the four neighborhoods, and although neighborhood committees or meetings could be held in each, no neighborhood has a sufficient number of farm members to justify a separate larger community committee for itself alone. Two representatives from each neighborhood would constitute a workable size larger community committee.

Component Neighborhoods within the Loachapoka and Auburn Communities:

(1) Loachapoka. Loachapoka village seems to be a strong neighborhood, with stores, churches, clubs, and a grade and junior high school located on a main railroad line. Remnants of families from peripheral neighborhoods have been drawn in by the school bus and automobile after the abandonment of their own neighborhood schools and weakening of their churches by loss of membership through death, "moving to town," and competition of town churches with weekly services. Loachapoka used to be a town center of considerable size, a large shipping point for cotton. Most of the farmers living in the village oversee tenants who operate their farms outside. The village is strongly organized in a Farm Bureau, a Home Demonstration Club, and a 4-H Club.

(2) Bee Hive. Bee Hive neighborhood lies 4 miles southeast of Loachapoka and is frequently considered part of Loachapoka community. But the neighborhood tends to resent this erasure of their own distinctive identity and wants its own representatives on larger community committees. The children attend grammar and junior high school at Loachapoka, but go to Auburn for senior high school. The neighborhood has no local church, but does have a Home Demonstration Club.

(3) Beat Six and Tuskegee Highway. This neighborhood, arbitrarily so designated for convenience only, lies along the three highways leading west and southwest of Auburn, within about 4 miles of the city. Formerly the Asbury Church served the neighborhood which was known as the Asbury Church community. But depopulation has reduced the church to a single monthly service and nearly to financial extinction. Too few members remain to maintain a church organization. As a result, the neighborhood

tends to focus on Auburn. The level of living of its constituent families is sufficiently high to give them common interests with town families, many of whom previously resided in the rural neighborhood. Although it has its Home Demonstration and 4-H clubs, the neighborhood has become, to a considerable extent, suburbanized socially, if not occupationally.

(4) Auburn Heights. Auburn Heights is a neighborhood lying between Auburn and Opelika cities. Its characteristics are largely those of Beat Six and Tuskegee Highway neighborhood. Some of the families live in Opelika Beat and identify themselves as closely with Opelika as they do with Auburn. The neighborhood straddles the beat line. Since Opelika has no other distinct farm neighborhood with which this neighborhood could meet in a larger community, it appears more logical for it to send representatives to a larger Loachapoka Auburn Community Committee.

